

Count Down

By Robin Morgan

Survival is the final offer
that arrives at the eleventh hour
just when pain to the tenth power
5 would kill you with another ninth degree.

By then, relief strikes you brief as an eighth note;
you wear doom proudly; it's your seventh seal.
But life whispers through your sixth sense
10 of what might await you in some fifth dimension

where miracle is saved for the fourth quarter.
Tricked, you sigh and rise on the third day.
You know better, but with no second thought,
15 risk that first step—absurd as first love at first sight—

as if you were back at ground zero, as if it cost
nothing, as if this were not the last laugh.